ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

Update briefing for Overview Scrutiny Member Board
Dated: 7 February 2018

Customer Access Strategy and Support for all Customers

This briefing note is designed to give an overview of the previous, current and future situation regarding customer access and support of all customers. This paper summarises the proposed plans that will be developed to ensure all customers can access services regardless of their personal circumstances.

Background

- The Council has previously offered a limited number of digital services to customers.
- Customer Access Strategy 2011 – 2015
- No evidence of public involvement in developing customer access channels.
- The majority of services are not offered digitally
- Digital services not delivered in a holistic manner and it is not possible to access accurate digital completion rates and times across the Council.

Current Situation

- In 2017 a Customer Service and Efficiency Programme was established. The aim of the programme is to deliver a comprehensive set of work streams to enable value for money, process redesign, self-service and digital options.
- Monthly briefing with Councillors to inform and develop the programme.
- Services are currently writing business cases on which services can be made more efficient and delivered in a customer focused manner.
- Some technology platforms are being replaced because of old technology and the expiry of some IT contracts. These include the Your Account system.
- Promotion of the new Your Account Service has taken place to engage with the public and receive their feedback.
- Your Account roadshows and engagement sessions have taken place with local community groups, including vulnerable customers.

- Support is offered to customers through all libraries and neighbourhood hubs. Customer service staff will support customers to complete digital forms. Alternatively staff will complete these forms on behalf of the customers.
- Support is also available to all customers on the telephone, via the contact centre. Contact centre staff can complete forms on behalf of customers or support the customer to complete it themselves.
- The Council website is setup using the Accessibility Standards to support customers with disabilities.

Future

Access to customer services will not use a digital by default approach and will instead use a digital first strategy. This means that the Council will adopt a preference for customers to access services through a self-serve digital channel, but this will never exclude customers who cannot or will not use this channel from receiving services.

Developing technologies to allow joined up and easy to use services including social media integration.

Develop digital champion ethos which will enable staff who visit customers in the community to use mobile technology to access services.

Benchmark customer service delivery through the consolidation of customer services.

The Council is developing a new Customer Access Strategy

- Strategy will be developed through discussions with Councillors, residents, local businesses and partner agencies.
- Finished strategy to be presented for approval in May 2018
- Help as many customers as possible to access services digitally.
- Discuss with partner agencies how we can support those who find digital access challenging. The Council will support these people/groups so they continue to have access to services they need.
- Customers to co-design and test new digital services before they 'go live'
- Continually develop digital services using feedback and complaints from all customers.
- On-going discussions with customers throughout the delivery of the strategy to shape the priorities and development of the programme.

Members have recently requested digital solutions to support a number of groups including Adoption Panels and Neighbourhood Working. Digital services will setup a working group to develop digital solutions to support these activities, including paperless meetings, document sharing and video conferencing.